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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/604,316	06/27/2000	Gary R. Tidwell	BS99-124	5129

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EXAMINER

STIMPAK, JOHNNA

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3623

DATE MAILED: 04/11/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/604,316

Applicant(s)

TIDWELL ET AL.

Examiner

Johnna R Stimpak

Art Unit

3623

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 27 June 2000.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-53 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-53 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 27 June 2000 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 4.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other:

Art Unit: 3623

DETAILED ACTION

The following is a first Office Action upon examination of application number

SM 09/604316. Claims 1-⁵³~~46~~ are pending and have been examined on the merits discussed below.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

The changes made to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 (AIPA) and the Intellectual Property and High Technology Technical Amendments Act of 2002 do not apply when the reference is a U.S. patent resulting directly or indirectly from an international application filed before November 29, 2000. Therefore, the prior art date of the reference is determined under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA (pre-AIPA 35 U.S.C. 102(e)).

2. **Claims 1-5, 7, 9, 11-13, 17-19, 21-24, 26, 27, 29-32, 34-36, 38, 39, 42-45, 46-49, 51 and 52** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Jones et al, U.S. Patent No. 6,219,648 B1.

As per **claim 1**, Jones et al teaches a server in communication with an electronic network (column 7, lines 40-44, 49-51, 62-67 – a paging server is used to facilitate notification of trouble ticket alerts); a database in communication with the server, the database storing a plurality of

Art Unit: 3623

trouble tickets (column 5, lines 55-60, column 6, lines 49-56) – information pertaining to trouble tickets is stored); a user computer in communication with the network and having access, via a graphical user interface (GUI), to the server, the graphical user interface including at least one screen, the screen being operable to enter a new trouble ticket along with (i) a person responsible for resolving the ticket (column 6, lines 5-12, lines 40-49, column 5, lines 55-60 – service center personnel enter trouble ticket information such as ID of the technician involved in resolution) and (ii) a severity level for the trouble ticket, and to store the trouble ticket in the database (column 5, lines 55-67 – escalation levels are entered for the trouble ticket which alert appropriate personnel to respond); and a paging system, in communication with the server, wherein when the severity level associated with the trouble ticket is above a predetermined threshold, the server automatically initiates a call to the person responsible via the paging system (column 7, lines 55-67 – when alerting criteria is satisfied, the managing module sends an alert through a paging server to a specified person).

As per **claim 2**, Jones et al teaches an email server, wherein the email server automatically sends an email message to the person responsible for resolving the ticket and the email message includes at least a trouble ticket number (column 3, lines 45-47, column 5, lines 51-60 – an email message is sent upon alert, including trouble ticket number).

As per **claim 3**, Jones et al teaches a report creation module, the report creation module being operable to generate reports based on the plurality of trouble tickets stored in the database (column 8, lines 55-67).

As per **claim 4**, Jones et al teaches a duplicate search module, the duplicate search module identifying at least one of an actual or a potential duplicate trouble ticket stored in the

Art Unit: 3623

database (column 10, lines 11-18 – the parsing module searches ticket numbers to see if there are duplicate numbers, if so, the second ticket is ignored).

As per **claim 5**, Jones et al teaches the duplicate search module lists at least one pair of the actual or potential duplicate trouble tickets (column 10, lines 4-18 – the parsing manager sorts the master ticket numbers which are associated with each trouble ticket, when a first and second trouble ticket have the same master ticket number, the second can be ignored).

As per **claim 7**, Jones et al teaches a means for communicating with and sharing trouble ticket data with another organization (column 4, lines 6-10 – the alerting module send an alert corresponding to an escalation level of the trouble ticket to the appropriate recipient. Inherently, the intended recipients could be service personnel in separate organizations of a service company, for example, a computer service company may have separate service personnel who specialize in hardware, some who specialize in software, etc. These personnel would be in different organizations of the computer service company).

As per **claim 9**, Jones et al teaches the database further stores status information (column 9, lines 1-22).

As per **claim 11**, Jones et al teaches the network comprises the Internet (column 6, lines 28-32).

As per **claim 12**, Jones et al teaches a plurality of computers interconnected in a network, one of the computers including a trouble ticket database and an executable program for accessing and updating the database and each of the computers having access to a graphical user interface (GUI), the GUI including at least one screen operable to add a new trouble ticket to the database (column 6, lines 5-34), each trouble ticket including at least (i) a description of the issue

Art Unit: 3623

(inherently a trouble ticket will include some description of the issue or problem), (ii) a person responsible for resolving the issue (column 8 lines 65-67 the report indicates the appropriate service center to handle the ticket, column 9, the position field indicates the technician assigned to the trouble ticket) and (iii) a severity level of the issue (column 9 the time field indicates the time when the ticket was generated, column 7, lines 55-58, time duration is used for alerting appropriate personnel to respond); an email system in communication with the executable program, the executable program automatically emailing a trouble ticket number to the person responsible for resolving the issue (column 7, lines 62-67, column 8, lines 1-4 – the error manager alerts the appropriate personnel by email); and a paging system automatically paging the person responsible for resolving the issue when the severity level of the trouble ticket is above a predetermined threshold (column 7, lines 62-67, column 8, lines 1-4 – the error manager alerts the appropriate personnel by paging);

As per **claim 13**, teaches the paging system transmits the trouble ticket number (column 2, lines 25-31).

As per **claim 17**, teaches a duplicate trouble ticket module (column 10, lines 11-18 – the parsing module searches ticket numbers to see if there are duplicate numbers, if so, the second ticket is ignored).

As per **claim 18**, teaches a report creation module (column 8, lines 55-67).

As per **claim 19**, teaches the database is accessible via the Internet (column 6, lines 28-32).

As per **claim 21**, teaches a central computer including an executable program and a database wherein the database stores a plurality of trouble tickets (column 6, lines 5-34 and 49-

Art Unit: 3623

52), each trouble ticket including a trouble ticket number, an issue description and a duplicate ticket flag (column 9, lines 36-40 (service code defines service to be provided), 48-50 (trouble ticket number) and lines 63-66 (function level code refers to tickets grouped together based on duplicate master ticket number) column 10, lines 4-10); a plurality of user computers connected to the central computer via a network, the user computers displaying a graphical user interface (GUI) that permits entry and updating of trouble tickets in the database (column 6, lines 15-27 and 35-45 – the system runs on a computer wherein the service providers enter trouble ticket information); and a duplicate ticket module operable to search the database for actual or potential duplicate trouble tickets, the duplicate ticket module making available a list of actual or potential duplicate trouble tickets, wherein one or more duplicate trouble tickets are flagged with a trouble ticket number of a representative trouble ticket (column 10, lines 4-24 – the ticket numbers are grouped according to master ticket number, a parsing module combines trouble tickets having the same master ticket number by checking the trouble ticket numbers).

As per **claim 22**, teaches a paging system (column 7, lines 55-67 – when alerting criteria is satisfied, the managing module sends an alert through a paging server to a specified person).

As per **claim 23**, teaches each trouble ticket further includes an indication of severity and a person responsible field and when the indication of severity exceeds a predetermined threshold, the person identified in the person responsible field is paged (column 7, lines 55-67 – when alerting criteria is satisfied, the managing module sends an alert through a paging server to a specified person also column 9, lines 13-14 (the time field) – in Jones et al when the time duration reaches the specified criteria and alert is sent, the time field is included on the trouble ticket).

Art Unit: 3623

As per **claim 24**, teaches an email server, wherein the person identified in the person responsible field is sent an email alerting him that he has been assigned a trouble ticket (column 62-67 and column 8, lines 1-5 – the person responsible for responding to the alert is emailed).

As per **claim 26**, Jones et al teaches means for communicating with an outsourced organization (column 7, lines 65-67 and column 8, lines 1-5 – a paging server and email are used to contact the responsible person for resolution of the trouble ticket).

As per **claim 27**, teaches the means for communicating comprising the Internet (column 6, lines 28-32).

As per **claims 29-32 and 34-36**, they are the method for performing the steps of the system in claims 1-5, 7 and 9, therefore the same rejection as applied to claims 1-5, 7 and 9 apply to claims 29-32 and 34-36.

3MD As per **claims 38, 39 and ⁴²43-45**, they are the method for performing the steps of the system in claims 12, 13 and 16-19, therefore the same rejection as applied to claims 12, 13 and 16-19 also applies to claims 38, 39 and 42-45.

As per **claims 46-49, 51 and 52**, they are the method for performing the steps of the system in claims 21-24, 26 and 27, therefore the same rejection as applied to claims 21-24, 26 and 27 also applies to claims 46-49, 51 and 52.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person

Art Unit: 3623

having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. **Claims 8, 10, 14, 15, 20, 28, 37, 40, 41 and 53** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jones et al in view of Kidder et al, US Patent No. 6,445,774 B1.

As per **claim 8**, Jones et al teaches all the limitations of claim 8 as applied to claim 1 above, but does not teach the database further stores information relating to whether a resolution of a trouble ticket, proposed by outsourced personnel, has been verified. Kidder et al teaches storing a “terminate message” conveying that the ticket has been closed (column 13, lines 2-5). It is old and well known in the art that trouble tickets are “closed out” upon delivery of service as an indication that the problem does not need to be attended to. Jones et al teaches recording the open date of the trouble ticket so it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate the recordation of the closed date of Kidder et al into the trouble ticket of Jones et al to provide for an indication that the particular matter does not need any further consideration. This is helpful for saving time from attending to problems that have already been resolved.

As per **claim 10**, Jones et al teaches all the limitation of claim 10 as applied to claim 1, but does not teach the database further stores information associating a trouble ticket to a geographical region. Kidder et al teaches recording the site location data (column 11, line 35). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include the geographical information of Kidder et al in the trouble ticket of Jones et al for tracking purposes and for purposes of assigning responsible personnel. Doing this would give the responsible personnel more information to lead to the resolution of the problem. The personnel would be more informed as to the location of the problem and would know exactly where to go. This would cut down on wasting time trying to track down the problem.

Art Unit: 3623

As per **claim 14**, Jones et al teaches new trouble ticket fields including status (column 9, lines 50-54) but does not teach the screen operable to add a new trouble ticket includes a field indicating the closed date of the trouble ticket. Kidder et al teaches storing a “terminate message” conveying that the ticket has been closed (column 13, lines 2-5). It is old and well known in the art that trouble tickets are “closed out” upon delivery of service as an indication that the problem does not need to be attended to. Jones et al teaches recording the open date of the trouble ticket so it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate the recordation of the closed date of Kidder et al into the trouble ticket of Jones et al to provide for an indication that the particular matter does not need any further consideration. This is helpful for saving time from attending to problems that have already been resolved.

As per **claim 15**, Jones et al teaches all the limitation of claim 15 as applied to claim 12, but does not teach the database further stores information associating a trouble ticket to a geographical region. Kidder et al teaches recording the site location data (column 11, line 35). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include the geographical information of Kidder et al in the trouble ticket of Jones et al for tracking purposes and for purposes of assigning responsible personnel. Doing this would give the responsible personnel more information to lead to the resolution of the problem. The personnel would be more informed as to the location of the problem and would know exactly where to go. This would cut down on wasting time trying to track down the problem.

As per **claim 20**, Jones et al teaches all the limitations of claim 20 as applied to claim 12, but does not teach an outsourced organization updates the database. Kidder et al teaches a network monitor, or the person assigned to the trouble ticket, has access to update fields in the

Art Unit: 3623

report (column 12, lines 24-35, column 11, lines 64-67). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to let the person responsible for the resolution to update the system of Jones et al because Jones et al already teaches notifying the person responsible that a trouble ticket must be attended to. Letting the person responsible update the system to confirm the problem is being resolved would provide for better communication between all personnel with access to the trouble ticket. The motivation would be so that all personnel would have updated information as to the status of the trouble ticket.

As per **claim 28**, Jones et al teaches all the limitation of claim 28 as applied to claim 21, but does not teach the database further stores information associating a trouble ticket to a geographical region. Kidder et al teaches recording the site location data (column 11, line 35). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to include the geographical information of Kidder et al in the trouble ticket of Jones et al for tracking purposes and for purposes of assigning responsible personnel. Doing this would give the responsible personnel more information to lead to the resolution of the problem. The personnel would be more informed as to the location of the problem and would know exactly where to go. This would cut down on wasting time trying to track down the problem.

As per **claim 37**, it is the method of the steps of the system of claim 10, therefore the same rejection as applied to claim 10 also applies to claim 37.

As per **claim 40**, it is the method of the steps of the system of claim 14, therefore the same rejection as applied to claim 14 also applies to claim 40.

As per **claim 41**, it is the method of the steps of the system of claim 15, therefore the same rejection as applied to claim 15 also applies to claim 41.

Art Unit: 3623

As per **claim 53**, it is the method of the steps of the system of claim 28, therefore the same rejection as applied to claim 28 also applies to claim 53.

5. **Claims 6, 16, 25, 33, 42 and 50** is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jones et al, US Patent No. 6,219,648 B1

As per **claim 6**, Jones et al teaches the trouble tickets comprise at least one of a problem (column 5, lines 55-60) and an inquiry (column 5, lines 55-60), but does not teach adding a bill notification and a user acceptance data issue to the database. Official notice is taken that it is old and well known that when a service is performed a charges will incur. It would have been obvious to add billing information to the database for proper record keeping. It would also be obvious to include user acceptance data. It is also old and well known that when a service is performed there may be other non-related or related services that could be performed that are not known at the time the trouble ticket is processed. It would be obvious to make note of this and get the acceptance from the user. If the user agrees, the service can be performed and an appropriate charge will be made. The motivation for adding the billing information and user acceptance information would be to keep an accurate record of charges to be made for services provided. This will also cut down on services being provided that are not wanted by the user.

As per **claim 16**, the same rejection as applied to claim 6 above is applied to claim 16.

As per **claim 25**, the same rejection as applied to claim 6 above is applied to claim 25.

As per **claim 33**, it is the method of the steps of the system of claim 6, therefore the same rejection as applied to claim 6 also applies to claim 33.

Art Unit: 3623

As per **claim 42**, it is the method of the steps of the system of claim 16, therefore the same rejection as applied to claims 16 also applies to claim 42.

As per **claim 50**, it is the method of the steps of the system of claim 25, therefore the same rejection as applied to claim 25 also applies to claim 50.

Conclusion

6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Turnbull et al, U.S. Patent No. 6,389,426 B1 – central trouble ticket database and system and method to facilitate ticketing, trending and tracking.

Teglovic et al, U.S. Patent No. 5,692,030 – electronic interface for exchange of trouble administration information.

Art Unit: 3623

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to **Johnna Stimpak** whose telephone number is **703-305-4566**. The examiner can normally be reached Monday through Friday from 8:00 to 5:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, **Tariq Hafiz**, can be reached on **703-305-9643**.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the **Receptionist** whose telephone number is **703-308-1113**.

Any response to this action should be mailed to:

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Hand delivered responses should be brought to Crystal Park 5, 2451 Crystal Drive, Arlington, VA, 7th Floor.

Susanna Diaz
Susanna Diaz
Patent Examiner
Art Unit 3623